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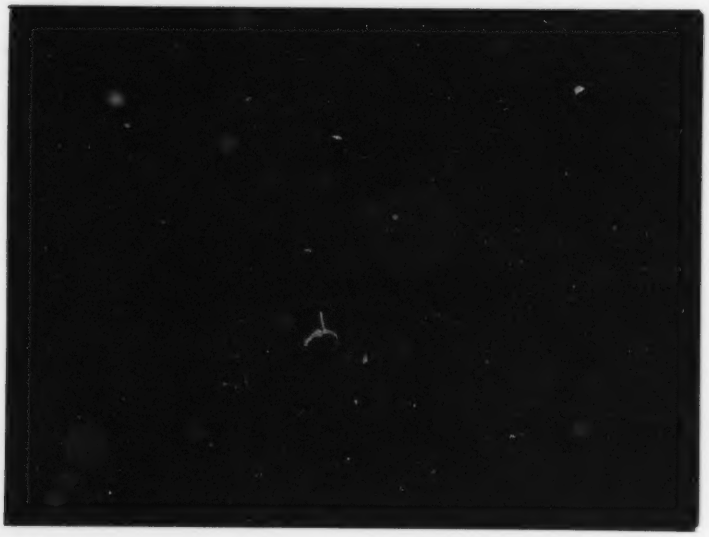

PREVENTING WIFE BATTERING:
TOWARDS A NEW UNDERSTANDING

A think-tank report

by

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Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is more than a report. It is a vision for the future, created primarily through the experiences, the sharing of emotions, and the thoughts of twelve women, from different locations across Canada and from different perspectives. These women came together for a two-day "think tank" focussed on preventing violence in the home against women, and sponsored by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

All twelve women: Lorraine Berzins, Trudy Don, Surjeet Kalsey, Linda MacLeod, Jennifer Mercer, Carol Oliver, Cécile Rémillard-Beaudry, Patty Seres, Elly Silverman, Denise Stewart, Sharon Swann, and Ann Tweddle provided the wisdom, the passion, and the insights for this communication effort. But all of us are only messengers for the tens of thousands of women we have talked to, worked with, laughed with and cried with, in our efforts to reduce violence against women and to end the violation of all women in our society. It is these innumerable, courageous, hopeful women who provided the inspiration and wisdom for the messages offered through this account. They are the true authors of our vision for the future.

Linda MacLeod

INTRODUCTION

Unfulfilled Hope: A Vision in Transition

> *Hope has two beautiful daughters, anger and courage: anger at the way things are, and courage to work to make things other than they are.*[1]

As a society, we are currently in a transition period in our understanding of how to stop wife battering. Although we are driven by a strong, common hope to end this pervasive social problem, we have not reached a clear understanding of how to prevent violence against women in the home. Hope has provided the constant fuel necessary to energize the widespread and significant efforts over the past decade to reduce the impact of wife battering in Canadian society, and to provide support and protection to women and their children in crisis. But even this hope has had multiple and sometimes tangled dimensions.

The hope and desire to end wife battering first surfaced as anger at the widespread violence against women. This anger was shared by all those working to prevent wife battering, regardless of their disciplines, jurisdictions, and perspectives. Anger stimulated hope which has been given substance through the sincere caring, good intentions, and superhuman efforts of many women and men — front-line workers, policy-makers, and advocates. They have worked vigorously to reduce violence against women and to help women when they are battered.

However, neither widely shared visions of how to realize this hope nor unified sets of responses to address the problem have emerged. Many of those working with women who have been battered, their children and/or their husbands feel that we have evolved rapidly in our ability to respond effectively at the time of crisis. They also believe that we are gaining the knowledge, public acceptance, and the funding support, albeit insufficient, needed to significantly reduce wife battering in our society. And yet, despite this progress, something is blocking the realization of our mutual goal. What is it?

Over the past two years, discussion on this question has intensified in coordinating committees, seminars, and interdisciplinary consultations and projects across Canada. In the ensuing discussion, we are trying to move beyond anger to build upon shared hope and genuine concern.

A "Think Tank" For Women: A Catalyst For Understanding

In the past few years, discontent with existing approaches has grown. To address this concern, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW) invited twelve women (identified in Appendix I) from disparate locations and many perspectives to participate in a two-day "think-tank", February 23-24, 1989. As front-line workers, policy-makers, and advocates, they work with and for women who are battered. The participants had the following goals:

- to analyse the concerns of people working in this area, concerns which have arisen because widespread progress toward prevention has yet to be made despite significant strides in dealing with crisis situations;
- to seek alternative visions to prevent wife battering;
- to help stimulate wider discussion of innovative approaches which truly address the experiences of all people affected by the issue.

While the thoughts and feelings of the "think-tank" participants have provided the major resource, spirit, and energy for writing this paper,[2] the report also reflects a decade of research and advocacy experience of the author. In the past decade, I have spoken to hundreds of women who have been battered, and hundreds of volunteers and professionals who are working to stop the violence. As the technical author, I take responsibility for the synthesis, but give credit for many insights to the "think-tank" participants and the other women who have shared their experiences with me. Throughout the paper, I have made liberal use of two sources to clarify as well as to give feeling to the points made in the text. In addition to poems written by Surjeet Kalsey, passages have been taken from *Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture: A Challenge to Our Way of Living*,[3] a kit recently published by the Church

Council on Justice and Corrections. Lorraine Berzins is one of the kit's principle authors. Both Surjeet and Lorraine were "think-tank" participants.

This report was written to serve as a catalyst. It represents an attempt to place our dialogue and our initiatives on a positive, constructive, passionate, and perhaps spiritual plane that speaks to women's realities, to women's values and to communal values.

Through this report, the CACSW and the think-tank participants will share with you, the reader, the many different streams of our questioning, the beginnings of our redefinition of the problem, and our dreams for ending violence against women through practical action. We hope that, through your own discussions, and ideas, you will join us in developing a new vision, thereby helping us reach our common goal.

A Preview of the Insights

From the "think tank", three major insights arose which will be elaborated throughout this paper.

First, the hopes, plans, experiences, and feelings of women who are violated must be respected. Those who want to stop the violence can give women added tools to choose from, including information and encouragement, to create personal solutions. Service-providers and the community should be their partners, facilitating their choices, but should not erode women's ability or right to make choices.

Second, the common ground we all share with women who have been battered provides the energy for change. We need the courage to understand violence in terms of our own experiences of being violated, even if we have not been physically abused.

Third, to reduce violence against women, and to obviate the violation of women and men in our society, we must open ourselves up to changes in our personal and public lives. Through our institutions, no less than through our personal interactions, we need to lessen separation between the private and public spheres of our lives.

Organization of the Report

Change is not always clear, predictable, or linear. Change in our understanding of wife battering is no exception. To trace changes in our evolution of hope from anger to the courage to understand, I have arbitrarily divided its description into two stages. I would ask the reader to be conscious of the fact that these stages are constructs only, and in reality overlap one another both temporally and substantively.

THE FIRST STAGE

The first stage was a recognition of the problem. It derived from outrage and from a desire to protect women who are battered. This stage, for the purpose of this analysis, began with the creation of the first transition houses in Canada in 1972 and gained momentum when wife battering came to national public attention in the early 1980s. Women fought for a recognition of the powerlessness stemming from physical, psychological, verbal, and economic battering. They fought for protection, safety, and the right to be listened to. While prevention was always the ultimate goal, the strongest immediate concern was to provide women with the support and protection needed at the time of the crisis. The first stage sought to bring knowledge of violence against women in the home to public attention. To impress on the general public the seriousness of the problem, physical violence was emphasized although psychological violence was acknowledged.

This first stage, characterized as it was by strong feelings, advocated strong solutions to deal with the problem of violence against women. When the problem was first brought to public attention, the initial reaction was disbelief and denial of its prevalence and severity. But denial fairly quickly gave way to horror and outrage at the extent of wife battering, and anger at the men who abuse their wives. The focus became how to take measures to protect women from this form of violence, and how to attack the chaos and unpredictability of the violence with rational, clear solutions.

Throughout the first stage, the concern over changing the batterers' behaviour in an attempt to prevent future violence was characterized by ambivalence and attitudes typical of the time, namely, that any attempt to change the man was probably doomed to failure, and that any preventive action should concentrate on the next generation.

Programs

Significant energy went into creating programs to protect the women and to give a strong message to the public that wife battering was wrong and would not be tolerated. Considerable progress was made towards these goals:

- police across Canada adopted more aggressive charging policies;
- the number of transition houses, multi-purpose emergency shelters, and safe-house networks available to provide women and their children with shelter from violence grew to more than 300 in Canada;
- public awareness of the enormity and unfairness of the problem mushroomed;
- in some provinces and territories, governments increased their resource commitments;
- in 1988, the federal government committed $40 million to be spent on the prevention of family violence over a four-year period.

Problems

Despite this significant progress, some puzzling problems in both the attitudes and accomplishments of the first stage surfaced as well. These problems put in question the effectiveness of services, policies, and practices characteristic of first-stage responses. Three of these problems are highlighted below.

▩ Bureaucratization of services

With increased government support came the need for more coordination of services, more communication among different levels of governments, and more accountability between governments and front-line services. As a result, administrative and operational detail gradually increased. At the same time, with increased knowledge of women's needs and the lack of available support services outside transition houses in many communities, transition-house workers began to look for additional funds to provide more follow-up, support, and preventive services. Further, to respond to the growing waiting lists of transition houses in many communities, the size of transition houses and the number of staff also grew. The result of these intersecting trends was that many transition-house workers were spending more time on administrative details such as fundraising and filling out forms. Together with the extra internal staff demands generated by additional functions of larger transition houses, some staff began to feel that they didn't have sufficient time for the women who came to them for help.

▩ Ambivalence towards the more aggressive charging policies

Charging policies were not working smoothly in many locations. Some police were reluctant to charge, and some police and Crown attorneys reported that women who had been battered often asked to have charges dropped after charges were laid.

▪ "Battered women" as a stigmatizing label

Service-providers and advocates became concerned that the policies and programs put in place to protect women who are battered were not meeting women's needs. Some speculated that one possible reason may be the problem of naming. Many women who had been battered and their advocates reported that some women said they were made to feel even more powerless by institutions which saw them only as "victims", or "battered wives". They explained that this labelling made them feel "different" from other women and men, and that their needs to feel supported and "not alone" were ignored and denied.

Exploring the Sources of These Problems

In reaction to these problems, service-providers began to question whether women's voices were being lost in the specific ways our society attempted to protect women and to deal with the crisis of wife battering. Advocates for women who are battered began to question whether some of the first-stage responses to the problem might, in fact, violate women because the responses unintentionally mirrored the dynamics and characteristics of wife battering. To be a woman who is battered in our society is to share certain experiences, including being controlled, being isolated, being expected to meet unrealistic ideas of family and happiness, being saddled with responsibility for both the problem and the solution, and having your reality constantly negated.[4]

▪ The Question of Control

The responses created in the first stage emanated from strong feelings which generated a desire for equally strong responses. As a result, many programs and initiatives created in this stage are deeply rooted in strong models of control, characterized by hierarchical structure as well as an over-emphasis on productivity and rationality which are inappropriate to deal with this problem.

For example, criminal justice system responses have been very prominent since the early 1980s. Charging policies, legislative changes allowing women to testify against their husbands, and improved police training all have had a significant influence on public acceptance of wife assault as a crime. While this accomplishment is laudable, and the positive effects of these advances cannot be denied, the criminal justice system's highly visible role in addressing battering indicates a shift in style from the early mutual support of transition houses to one of public control.

While there is widespread support for a strong societal message that wife assault is a crime, those working to prevent wife battering are beginning to ask whether the use of criminal justice sanctions as a **major** social response to stop violence and to change public attitudes is too heavy-handed an approach to the problem. Some feel that the strong emphasis on this type of response can seem like an attempt to batter the problem into submission.

Some advocates feel that women can lose in this show of force. For example, battered women may find they are denied their right to drop charges once their husband has been charged, or may be coerced to accept criminal justice intervention in order to gain access to other types of services. One woman lamented:

> *Participation in the criminal justice system wasn't presented to me as a right. It was an obligation. I was made to feel that I had no choice if I wanted any other kind of support or help.*

In addition to these types of control, some fear that front-line services, with increasingly bureaucratized services and complex demands, are unintentionally and unknowingly asserting control over women as well. Transition-house workers and other professionals working with battered women have a number of concerns:

- as front-line services become bigger and more bureaucratized and absorb more complex demands, a clinical, service-based (not woman-based) middle-class agency framework is replacing the feminist, communal philosophies of the early transition houses;
- closed doors and schedules, in some houses, are replacing the spontaneity and informality which characterized transition houses in earlier years;
- the efforts to provide the most effective, most professional service may generate responses based on clinical treatment models. While some advocates acknowledge that these models may be excellent for other situations, they worry that the models may not be tailored to the realities of wife battering;
- the models can be insensitive to what women need and want, ignoring the wisdom gained through the experiences of early transition-house workers. Thus inadvertently, people applying these models assert control over the women who come to them for help and over transition-house workers working from a non-clinical model.

Ironically, resistance to change by some transition-house workers has also been identified as another source of potential control over women, because some transition-house workers, familiar only with their own protocols and perspectives, may not be availing themselves of the knowledge and program options provided by others.

Unrealistic expectations placed on transition-house workers and other service-providers by governments, other funding agencies, and the general public can also have a controlling influence over both service-providers and women who are battered. Because of insufficient service options in most communities, police and others may use shelters as places to put women when they don't know what to do with them. They thereby disregard whether or not the shelters are able to provide the services the women need or want. For many women who are battered, and for the frustrated workers faced with this dilemma, this imposition feels like another type of violation.

■ Isolation and related problems

We often have a polarized understanding of violence against women: women are seen as pure and blameless victims and men are seen as brutal, cruel victimizers who have never been tender. This approach not only tends to isolate battered women, but to fragment the services created to reach out to them. Both battered women and service-providers may lack an understanding of the bond between the batterer and the battered, and of their mutual dependence. Battered women may be isolated from the batterers and may be encouraged to see them as unreachable, hopeless, and unchangeable.

These stereotypes encourage polarized thinking and labelling, rather than more holistic solutions which take many variables into consideration. The polarization extends into the transition-house movement itself. In some locations in Canada, fragmentation has become a serious problem. Transition-house workers in some communities are dividing along lines such as pay, ethnicity, colour, race, sexual orientation, and even according to whether or not they are unionized. There is a new push to create separate houses for Aboriginal women and immigrant women. Although these divisions are seen as solutions to specific problems, they erode the spirit which cemented transition-house workers and battered women in the past, that "we are all women in this together". Funding agencies can compound the problem of fragmentation when they rationalize their own decisions about resource allocations on the basis of these divisions.

Perhaps most tragic is that some well-meaning helpers unintentionally stigmatize, demoralize, and isolate women by making them admit they are battered. They inadvertently force women to accept a label, thereby stigmatizing them. In the process, they separate themselves from "those" women, and are unable to provide the support derived from an acceptance of commonality with women who are battered. This acceptance comes from the realization that almost all women and men share experiences of being psychologically violated by another person even if they have not been physically battered.

■ Unrealistic ideas of family and happiness

First-stage solutions are sometimes built on unrealistic expectations of behaviour for men and women and on unrealistic images of family life. Even though the socialization of girls has changed to some extent in the last two decades, boys are still encouraged to be aggressive, and children are encouraged to "compete" as "equals" in a hierarchical world rather than to cooperate.

We still have limited models for female/male relationships and for family life. Despite changes in women's roles and in family composition, our stereotype of a "happy" home still involves a husband and a wife, and the man is generally still dominant. This model is both unrealistic and potentially dangerous. One result is that, even though some women find ways to prevail in the emotional and housekeeping agenda in home life, many women still define being humiliated and degraded in more "public matters" as normal. Many women who come to shelters expect humiliation and cannot understand that this form of diminishment is akin to battering.

And to be "happy", homes are expected to be "problem-free". The "ideal" home is a non-conflictual home. Women and men are taught not to argue in front of their children. "Happy" families aren't supposed to fight even in private, and we reinforce this value by frowning broadly on anyone who raises her or his voice in public to either children or spouse. Our society still calls a marriage a success when people stay together for their lifetimes even when they hate each other, as long as they hate each other privately. A woman who is battered faces intense pressure not to tell.

A spinoff from these unrealistic expectations is that female/male relationships are given a primacy that often precludes strong support systems among friends of the same sex or in the more general community.

> *How much of what passes for intimacy between women is fixing women up so they can go back to their men?*
>
> Think-tank participant

But when women use one another in this way, in the name of friendship, they can disempower one another and continue to acquiesce to the controlling structures which keep them isolated.

■ Placing responsibility on women

In relationships where battering occurs, women as a group frequently are made to feel responsible for the problem. They are also expected to fashion the solution. In many first-stage responses, wife battering is defined as "a women's issue", which is used as a justification for leaving the responsibility for its solution to women. Ironically, women are expected to stop violence against women even though they do not perpetrate the violence.

■ Negating women's experiences

First-stage responses have a tendency to silence women because they tend to deny women's experiences, ignore the realities of women's lives, and associate the expression of emotion with violence. For many who adhere to the type of linear logic characteristic of responses at this stage, psychological violence can include "being emotional". Because men are more likely to be uncomfortable expressing strong emotions in ways that are not physically violent, first-stage responses (generally based on a more traditionally masculine than feminine viewpoint), devalue the positive aspects of emotion. Thus, the importance of emotional expression is negated.

First-stage solutions deny the passion and variability of life, leaving women feeling that these solutions do not speak to their realities. When emotional expression becomes part of the problem, women may feel that they must deserve the battering because they were "emotional women". Counsellors and others who intervene may teach women and men in a battering relationship less emotional and less passionate ways of relating to one another. These conflict resolution methods are often too "flat" to be effective in relationships where there is passionate feeling. Although anger is often defined as a negative

feeling, it can be valid and can be used as a catalyst to negotiate differences. By ignoring it, instead of promoting more constructive ways of dealing with it, the emotion of anger is denied and repressed.

Through many first-stage responses, women may even be invalidated through their children. Women who reach out for help to escape battering are often scrutinized for their parenting skills. Their fear of seeking help is escalated by the risk of losing custody of their children through their admission of family "problems". Again women are held responsible and accountable for the problem of men violating them. Again the solution is put on the woman who is "guilty" of "providing a poor home environment" for her child. Women's feelings of not being credible and not being able to find anyone who will understand them are further reinforced as public sympathy shifts from the woman to her children. In the past few years, research focussing on "breaking the cycle of violence" by counselling and educating children growing up in homes where battering occurs has gained credibility. Those who work with women who are battered believe that, through this refocussing, resource allocation has been filtering away from programs for women or for women and their children, towards programs for their children alone. While this level of prevention is needed, it perpetuates an individualistic view of the problem, reinforces in women the feelings that their plight is hopeless, and diverts attention from the women and from the social roots of violence.

First-stage responses also deny the realities and experiences of shelter workers. Women's groups have made countless recommendations urging more stable funding for existing shelters, and for better service provision. However, their recommendations are often not heeded. One example of their voices not being heard is "Project Haven", the $22 million project funded by Health and Welfare Canada through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Transition-house workers have criticized it for providing funding only for new shelter spaces, with no money for follow-up, advocacy, or preventive service provision.

The ramifications of inadvertently creating solutions which mirror some or all of the characteristics of the battering experience touch more than just the women who are battered and those women and men working to prevent violence. We are all diminished by a vision of help which fails to recognize the importance of our emotions, including compassion, tenderness, loving, nurturance, frustration, and disappointment as well as anger. We are all diminished by a vision of help which controls, isolates, creates unreachable and even dangerous expectations, and puts the major responsibility for change on only part of our population — on women. Through this controlling, limiting vision, we are all robbed of hope, energy, and creative passion. We are left wondering what went wrong.

Flesh Puppets

Who holds the remote control?
Who pulls the strings?
People are very busy, who cares.

People are like flesh puppets
like being controlled by
headless leaders
traditions
false faiths.

Change needs action.
Change needs ambition.
Change needs strength.
People are too afraid of the change
in the society
in traditions
in thinking.[5]
(Surjeet Kalsey)

THE TIME OF TRANSITION

The Sense of Powerlessness

Periods of transition are painful, but creative. Many people working to reduce the effects of violence and ultimately to prevent violence against women are experiencing confusion and a lack of direction. They feel caught in contradictions and yet are not sure how to extricate themselves. Their concern is as passionate as ever, and yet they have less certainty of how to achieve their goals.

> *My dilemma and my sense of despair and on occasion hopelessness . . . [comes from] . . . feeling trapped in a set of particular dynamics that I find contravene my convictions and my vision for a better world . . . All of us are a product of, and subject to the very social forces that we are committed to struggling against . . . We are under constraints that we at present are powerless to change.*
>
> Transition-house worker

Responses to violence against women which are based unwittingly on the same controlling, isolating dynamics as battering relationships have predictably led to the double victimization of women who are battered; they have also disempowered and demoralized women and men working to prevent wife battering. Models of help, which in certain respects mirror battering, also create confusion, low self-esteem, stigmatization, anger, helplessness, and feelings of impotence.

By working to prevent wife battering within a controlling, alienating, individualistic society, women and men struggling with their own first-stage responses have found themselves faced with difficulties and dilemmas which reinforce a sense of powerlessness. Although these often blur their vision and limit their ability to act in courageous, innovative ways, they are also potential stimulants for change. A few of these problems and dilemmas are summarized below.

The early transition-house workers saw themselves as catalysts to social change. They never intended transition houses to be the ultimate solution to wife battering, or even to be a permanent part of the solution. Present-day transition-house workers, however, working within a system based on control, scarce resources and fragmented services, find themselves fighting for long-term funding and valuing permanency.

> *We never wanted shelters to be forever, but we must hang on until we're ready to let go because we've fought so hard for everything. Besides, we just don't know who else will be there for women if we're not.*
>
> Think-tank participant

These incompatible attitudes may be fuelling the stagnation of transition houses. Many workers feel forced to hold on desperately to what they have instead of adjusting to changing realities in order to make themselves more relevant and sensitive to women's needs. They are caught in the dilemma of balancing the need to work for social change (which may result in losing their financial base), and the need to play the funding game, thus ensuring that their doors stay open for the women who need protection and support.

At least some transition-house workers at times feel powerless and, as a result, their ability to help may be diminished. This sense of powerlessness often arises from the difficulty in separating complex issues and remaining clear about the original purpose and mandate of their programs.

> *When we are feeling burned out, we label the women who come to us and ourselves with unrealistic expectations. We expect women to be "superwomen", "ideal clients", and we expect ourselves to be "ideal workers".*
>
> Think-tank participant

Frustrated workers are tempted to look for simple solutions based on stereotypes of women, men, and relationships. When this occurs, they compound the isolation and sense of failure of the women who come to them for help.

If I don't constantly keep in front of me the end goal of stopping the violence and valuing women and working in a cooperative system, then I start choosing strategies that are male-based and self-defeating. If I don't do this, then I begin to use "power over" strategies. These strategies and values are self-defeating.

Think-tank participant

Transition-house workers and other women working for the rights of women are experiencing a backlash; they feel they are paying a price for their accomplishments in lobbying for social change and in expanding their services.

The more we push for change, the more anti-woman sentiment surfaces, the more we hear shelter bashing, and the more we hear about intact families.

Think-tank participant

Because of this backlash, transition houses are even more persistently stereotyped, within the growing rhetoric which favours model, "intact" families. Transition houses are portrayed as institutions which break up families, and as services which employ "man-haters".

Transition-house workers are also attacked in contradictory ways. On the one hand they are asked by others concerned with battered women why they have so many "repeats". On the other hand, they are attacked for making women leave the shelter too soon.

Women who are battered also suffer from this backlash, because of "catch-22" stereotypes and conflicting advice. They may be asked by one person attempting to help them: "Why can't you make up your mind and do something about your situation"? Alternatively, they may be warned: "Don't go to a shelter. It'll break up your marriage". Public education messages may tell them to leave their husbands the first time they are hit. Friends and extended family may advise them to give their spouses another chance.

Contradictions and dilemmas have also arisen in justice system responses to wife battering. One of the most urgent needs of battered women is protection, which is primarily provided by the police. However, this protection is not appropriate to every situation. When the police come into the woman's home, they not only come in as a bigger power, they also destroy the mythology of the family as a "safe" place. Their presence is a public affirmation of the state in the home. The woman feels trapped and humiliated because she has been forced to admit to a stranger what she wouldn't even admit to her best friends.

The criminal justice system has played a strong role in recent years. However, an increasing number of people working within and outside the justice system now fear it may be too blunt an instrument. The tendency to rely solely on the criminal justice system and its initial intervention conveys a potent public education message, namely, that wife battering is wrong, a crime, and not to be tolerated.

The consequences of reliance on that system for those who are involved, long after the anger and outrage of society at wife battering have abated, include: court backlogs, insufficient personnel, and high costs of prosecuting. These consequences indicate the inability of the system to deal with the individual characteristics of each case; the possibility of using some parts of the system but not others; and the criminal justice system's controlling, punitive, and stigmatizing presence.

Moreover, the inconsistent, often undramatic sentences that are passed down through the system do not answer to the outraged public's sense of moral justice nor to the battered women's needs.

> *Why is the society not trying to keep us safe from the malevolent influences of bad people?*
>
> Think-tank participant

Women who are battered are left pondering: "Why did I ever call the police? They took away my privacy, my dignity, my family, my self-respect, my belief in what is right." And people working within the justice system may feel used

and unfairly maligned. They have been blamed for not fulfilling expectations that could never be fulfilled within the current justice system.

Looking Towards Future Directions

The dilemmas discussed above raise innumerable questions concerning our future directions:

- How do we set up early intervention programs without forcing people to admit they have a problem before they are ready to make this admission?
- How do we keep shelters from appearing to be stigmatizing services used by only the poor and uneducated?
- Can we create forms of intervention which do not produce another type of control over women?
- Are we over-intervening?
- Can innovative ways of reaching out to men who batter help to recreate our ideology in a constructive way?
- How can the backlash against transition houses and individual counselling for women be combatted and/or reversed?
- How can we recapture the larger vision of stopping violence against women, and at the same time deal effectively with the immediate need to help an individual woman?
- How do we keep wife battering on the public agenda?
- Should we be looking at a more cohesive vision of violence against women and children that includes incest, sexual assault, elder abuse, child abuse, and wife battering?
- Should we expand our definition of victims, perpetrators, and survivors to include the children, the extended family, friends, and in some cases the community?

These and many other questions which flow from the difficulties and dilemmas summarized above are as yet unanswered. To address them, we need a new vision.

"She has already stepped out
on to the fresh morning grass.
She has already started to
rewrite those pages of history
To create herself as a woman
who could say — NO MORE."[6]
(Surjeet Kalsey)

THE SECOND STAGE[7]

The Birth of the Second Stage

The second stage, which is only beginning, was conceived out of the questioning, frustration, despair, anger, and hope of those working to stop violence against women. Despite significant government financial commitments, some progress, and good intentions, many advocates feel that the present responses may not be adequate to stop the violence, without an injection of a new perspective. The second stage has been nurtured by the emerging realization that, while there is much good in what has been accomplished, we may need the courage to take a leap outside the bounds of what we know, and what we've tried. I label it a stage tentatively; it is perhaps less defined, more just an amorphous, inchoate, but new place.

The gestation period of the second stage has been characterized by dialogue. Some women and men began to ask difficult questions that challenged our whole approach, such as:

- "How can we amplify the voices of women?";
- "How can we give women real choices?";
- "How can we encourage more people to take responsibility for preventing violence against women?";
- "How can we make the solutions fit the complexity of the problems?".

The answers to these questions will appear elusive and the work involved in developing the second stage will be difficult. But the emergence of the second stage has brought forth new hope among women working to prevent violence. It has brought with it a desire for new alliances and a new energy.

The hope on which the second stage is based springs from the dream of many women to live and love in a non-violent society. All voices must be heard, all members of our society must be included in the process, and we must ensure that the values which connect us are reflected in our plans and actions.

The second stage places emphasis on the feelings of women who have been violated. For example, many women who have been battered feel that the most miraculous, courageous thing they can do is to say, "I'm leaving", "I'm not going to put up with the violence any more", and to take all the chances and uncertainty that come with that decision. They feel that the courage of taking the first step is often much more important than the result of that first step. The first real step a woman takes is to assert her conviction that she will no longer allow herself to be diminished or violated. It is the most important action she can take. Summoning up the courage to call the police or to go to the shelter deserves recognition, support, and celebration. Even if she does not follow through with the charges, even if she does return to the shelter many times after that first time, she deserves positive reinforcement. Her courage proves to herself that she is strong, that she is not diminished, that she will survive psychologically and physically.

Many women who have been battered feel strong. Some feel independent, like the woman quoted below.

> *You know what I want? I want to be independent. I'm not a dependent person. I never felt like a dependent person even with my husband. He married me for my independence. Maybe he couldn't live with it, but that was true. That's where the attraction came from. And I don't need anybody taking me by the hand and taking care of me. I need somebody to help me know how to do it on my own, and then I want them to give me a kick in the pants and tell me to go do it for myself.*

Women who are battered often do not feel like victims, except directly after a violent crisis.

I'm sick of people telling me what I should and should not feel. I don't feel like I was controlled by him. As a matter of fact, the more they talk at me, the more I feel like I was the one in control. You know what I miss the most right now? I miss taking care of him, not because I'm Florence Nightingale. I miss the feeling of being important and powerful that I get with him. I guess that's not what I'm supposed to say, but you know, he needs so much taking care of. He makes me feel like I'm the most important and strong woman in the world. I guess he has to hit me sometimes so that he can feel strong at least part of the time.

Women who are battered and leave their husbands to look for help rarely feel they are fleeing their marriages. They feel they are escaping a crisis in their marriages. Sometimes they just want "time out" to think things through, to heal, to cry.

I'll tell you what I want. I want to be left alone. All I wanted was to get him off my back for one night. I didn't want to leave him. I didn't want to change my life. I didn't want to get counselling. I just got scared. I don't want people making me feel that my life is no good.

Although it is sometimes difficult for shelter workers, policy-makers, and others to believe, women who are battered often feel love for their husbands or partners. They don't love or even like what he did to them when he battered them. But they love the tender, good, kind parts of him. They love the happy memories, the passion, the life-building they had with him. Even when they leave, they often "ache all over to have him hug me"; they wait for his phone call; they hope he's missing them.

Women who are battered feel that they want to reclaim their dignity. They resist admitting their battering publicly because then they would have to open their wounds to the world; exposed and naked, they would be unable to preserve their dignity.

Women who are battered, like all women and men, want passion in their lives — not just sexual passion, but a passionate commitment to living, a chance to really live life, free from violence. They love their children. They feel tortured with worry for their futures. The second stage builds on these bonds and does not easily separate the woman from her children or judge the woman through her children.

Women who are violated through battering rarely feel long-term anger, hate, or the need for revenge. They often feel sad for the dreams lost, sorry for their husbands, sorry for themselves and for their children, disappointed, empty, aching, but they rarely feel vengeful. And yet our first- stage responses ask for vengeance.

> *You know, my lawyer wants me to be mad. He wants me to want blood. He wants me to suck him dry financially. It seems like everybody I talk to, who says they want to help me, wants me to fight back. They want blood and guts, tears, tantrums. Well, that's not what I feel at all. I feel sorry for him. I miss him. Oh, I know I can't go back to him, but that's mainly for the kid's sake. I don't want them growing up thinking this is the way people have to live. But the last thing I want is more fighting.*

All these courageous feelings are the stuff on which the second stage is built. It is built on the acknowledgement that

> *. . . one woman's pain is all women's pain.*
>
> Think-tank participant

The second stage builds on passion, spontaneity, and the chaos of vital, everyday creating.

I Want My Chaos Back

Today I am three thousand miles away
from throbbing bubbling figurines of
my flesh . . . how much I miss their presence . . .
how much . . . the very thought of not being
with them makes my heart droop.
The honest voices,
the soft touches
The house filled with their noise
I am dying to hear, to feel.
This is a real loneliness.
This is a real barrenness.

I want to walk with you all,
I want my chaos back.[8]

(Surjeet Kalsey)

Overcoming Powerlessness Via a New Conception

One of women's most acute problems in our society is powerlessness. Women are denied and deny themselves political as well as personal power. They also imbue power with negative connotations.

> *There are many different kinds of power and power can be used for good, not just to control people.*
>
> Think-tank participant

Powerlessness is a particular problem for those trying to help women who are battered. This feeling is exaggerated when "women fall into the trap of actually believing that men (automatically and necessarily) have power over women" in interpersonal situations and in political situations. With this assumption, women then participate in the dynamic of acting as if women

> *. . . need to get men's approval before they can do things differently. Women (and men) perpetuate a narrow vision of power by automatically assuming that they have to gain access to patriarchal power in order to make something new happen. I think we need to prove to ourselves that we can do something non-patriarchal outside the patriarchal structure.*
>
> Think-tank participant

Because many women tend to reject power as outside themselves, or as corrupting, they deny themselves the power to effect needed change in policies and institutions. Similarly, this conception of power often proves to be an obstacle for those needing help. Early intervention is often needed in order to prevent wife battering. However, when women who are battered perceive the intervention as controlling and disempowering, they sometimes create barriers to this intervention in order to maintain some control over their lives, even though they may want help.

For example, they keep conversations and questions clear of the issue until they are willing to admit they are being battered. They isolate themselves to protect their secret; in many cases, they do this to maintain a feeling of equality. As soon as they are labelled as "battered women", they are likely to experience a distancing from those whom they hope will help. They fear that when they are seen as "helpless victims", their control over the solution will be lost.

The issue raised here concerns power. In every encounter with another person, there is a danger that each person may try to dominate the other. However, we must reconceptualize a type of personal power that is not based on domination, but finds expression in non-hierarchical, sharing encounters, where both people let go of their efforts to "dominate the encounter with my perceptions, my agenda, my needs".[9]

Power is commonly, though sometimes mistakenly, equated with control over others. The implication is that no matter how much well-meaning service-providers, friends, and family want to stop the violence and help the woman who is being battered, no one can force someone else to get help "for her own good". She may define this well-meant help as abusive and controlling, despite the good intentions behind it, and isolate herself from any other forms of help.

A New Language for Understanding Violence

In the second stage, a new vocabulary must be created which stresses our emotional and spiritual bonds. The term "battering" will no longer be broad enough, because it does not link all women. It has been used, albeit unintentionally, to isolate and stigmatize, to define women as victims, to diminish their strength, their independence, their courage. Similarly, "abuse" sounds too clinical and tends to pathologize those who have been abused. The use of both "battering" and "abuse" may result in emphasizing physical violence in a "hierarchy of violence".

In the second stage we will look for holistic, fluid, circular, connected solutions. The new vocabulary must focus on a new axis: the diminishment and enhancement of the person. Physical violence is a seriously diminishing experience. The new vocabulary must link the diminishment of the person with the diminishment of the community.

To help break through to this new vocabulary and this new understanding, the word "violation" has been used instead of "battering" and "abuse" by some of the participants of the "think tank". The result is the language of this report. "Violation" embraces feelings and experiences which acknowledge that the diminishment of a person also diminishes our shared moral base, our community, and our respect for life.

The Goals of the New Vision

What follows in this section is a kind of "constitution", a moral code for future action. It has been debated and drawn up informally by those working towards realizing the second stage. They are presented as if they are *fait accompli*. This is of course far from true, but they do represent a base of agreement and commitment.

The goal uniting those now working towards the second stage has several elements:

- to build a society in which women and children are not seen as "appropriate" victims;
- to build a society in which power is understood as power within and power through, rather than as power over, others;
- to build a society in which values traditionally associated with and reserved for the private domain are adopted in our public as well as our private lives. These values include emotion, contemplation, intuition, compassion, mercy, vulnerability, passivity (i.e., active receptivity), dependency, tenderness, nurturing, and caregiving.

Out of this global goal, the participants at the "think tank" shared in the building of the second stage by making certain commitments.

The Commitments of the Second Stage

Second-stage thinking involves a number of commitments:

We will help acknowledge how women feel, validate women's experience and feelings, and accept that it is fine to feel passionately about issues, events, and people.

We will model in our personal lives and in our intervention strategies, cooperative and non-hierarchical relationships.

We will take personal responsibility for change, and encourage others also to share responsibility, and not try to control others to think like us.

We will proceed in the conviction that it is time to move on, that we can no longer avoid structural and attitudinal change because it is "too big a problem".

We will move passionately toward attitudinal and structural change without abandoning crisis services.

We will not force women, men or children to get help, but rather will let them know that there are helping options available to them.

We will allow and encourage women to define their own problems and their own solutions, but will provide tools and support when the women ask for help to create their own solutions.

We will encourage others in the community to share responsibility for and responsiveness to, both the experiences of violation and the community's responses to violation.

We will put anger in its rightful place with all other emotions, and acknowledge anger as a good and appropriate emotion, as a potential catalyst for resolving differences. We will help develop and teach constructive, creative, non-violent ways of using anger to strengthen relationships and feelings of empowerment.

We will communicate to others that needing and wanting help is a necessary life experience.

We will communicate to others that violation is also part of the experiences of all women, and of many men.

We will share our knowledge that all relationships have bad times and power imbalances, and that there is no such thing as a perfectly "intact", "happy" family.

We will celebrate women for their courage in taking their first steps toward empowerment, and will not judge them if they choose a course different from ours.

We will embrace solutions which may be partial but which support the things women are prepared to do to lessen their violation.

We will build on the realities and feelings of women, men and children, and will not impose our expectations on them.

We will develop programs which make it "permissible" to look for help and which will allow people to say they are vulnerable without risking stigmatization, isolation, and further diminishment.

We will be vigilant to recognize elements of control in efforts to help and protect.

We will help support people to make "positive" moral choices towards an ethic of non-domination.

We will validate and emphasize community activities which strengthen communities and strengthen families in ways which reinforce different types of families and noncontrolling lifestyles.

We will encourage women, men, and the community to find solidarity in experiences where hope can live.

We will help generate innovative solutions from the community.

We will remember that the healing is in the accountability, in making the problem public.

We will encourage women, men, and communities to take responsibility for healing themselves.

We will at all times focus on emotional and spiritual safety in addition to physical safety.

We will make a conscious effort to involve men in the dialogue.

We will explore positive visions of power, and reject forms of control which are based on power over someone.

We will build our solutions on a recognition that woman violation is one part of a plethora of issues, and part of almost everything that affects women in our current society.

We will allow new insights and perspectives into our analysis and approach. We will make an effort to learn from other groups, but at the same time to gain respect for our own experiences.

We will put passion back in our solutions.

ACCELERATING THE CHANGE: WHAT IS NEEDED NOW?

We are only now entering into the second-stage response to woman violation. As with any new approach, much reflection, dialogue and planning are needed. The second stage will be a stage of dramatic and courageous action. Accordingly, a few ideas for practical action are suggested below. In addition, one "think-tank" participant's elaboration of more concrete ideas for action is included later in this report as Appendix II.

These ideas are both for immediate action and for stimulating thinking and discussion. In the spirit of involvement which characterizes the second stage, the authors of this report encourage you, the reader, to communicate your reactions to our suggestions.

Providing Crisis Options

Attitudinal and structural change may be the ultimate goal of second-stage responses, but at least until such changes are realized, there is an urgent need for effective and sensitive crisis services. The suggestions included in this section give recognition to this reality.

Governments should provide core funding to all existing and new transition houses.

Governments should provide support for expanded services to be provided by transition-house workers, in recognition of their expertise, which would generate more outreach, prevention, and follow-up to provide the options women need to create their own solutions.

Increasing Our Understanding of Woman Violation

Research is needed on issues which address women's agendas, experiences, and understanding of the issue. Health and Welfare Canada, in conjunction with Secretary of State Canada, should sponsor a forum to bring women together to determine a relevant research agenda.

Preventing Woman Violation

Women's drop-in neighbourhood centres that remain open in the evenings as well as the daytime would provide women with opportunities to gather information, support, and new friendships.

Support is needed for community development work.

Public education campaigns which stress the following are essential: most of us have experienced degrees of violation, women who have suffered physical violence from their husbands are not different from anyone else, and we are all responsible for prevention.

We can all support the little things women are willing to do to reduce their violation, as long as the risk of violence is minimized. For example, if a woman finds that her husband is particularly violent towards her on Friday nights when he goes out drinking with men he works with, she

may be willing to get the wives of the other men over to her house on these evenings to provide support and protection and to help neutralize the violence.

We can all follow the lead taken by some Aboriginal communities and mobilize more social pressure against men who inflict physical violence on their wives and are charged for their actions, by bringing community members to court when the man is brought before a judge. People in some Aboriginal communities have found that a man is much less tempted to be influenced by an adversarial style lawyer to plead "not guilty" in the presence of peers that he knows are aware of his actions and who disapprove.

Employers should be challenged to become part of the solution. Employers can sponsor awareness sessions for their employees, try to cut down on employer-supported get-togethers which involve alcohol, have a counsellor available who understands the reality of violence against woman, and be vigilant about preventing various forms of its manifestation in the workplace.

Organized men's cultural and leisure groups should be challenged to take a significant responsibility in the solution, as part of men taking responsibility for their own actions. To be effective, men's groups need first to look at themselves. They need to look at the attitudes and actions of their members, in order to make the transition from seeing men who batter as different from themselves and in order to recognize their own controlling behaviours. Already, a number of men's organizations are providing financial support to transition houses. We applaud them. They could also play an important formal public education role and, in more informal ways, could help to change attitudes about male roles and relationships between men and women.

To help women feel more empowered, women can be encouraged to draw up legal or informal agreements with their husbands to help communicate their concerns and to hold each party responsible for their actions.

Widespread education in schools, in community organizations, and on television, is needed to teach people how to argue and disagree in a fair way, and to reinforce the idea that expressing emotions is both good and healthy.

We need to create more portable services to deliver outreach programs so that women will not always have to leave their homes to gain access to the services they need.

Hostels should be created for men who beat their wives, thus allowing their wives and children to remain in the home. Care should be taken that these hostels are not seen as a replacement for transition houses, and that protection of the woman is a primary concern in planning hostels for men.

Opportunities must be created to encourage people concerned about violation to talk together. There are many people committed to and willing to make changes. However, they are confused about how to take action. Dialogue is needed to reduce service duplication, to share information, and to dispel destructive myths that different groups hold about each other. Service-providers, advocates, and policy-makers must have the chance to vent their anger at one another and to explore their differences.

Politicians at federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal levels must be brought face-to-face with the experience of violation, by participating in awareness groups and talking directly to women who have experienced violence. They may then create programs, policies, and services which effectively reduce and prevent violence against women.

Policy-makers must recognize that violation against women and children is an issue for social change, not a "women's issue".

Policy-makers, service-providers, and the general public must be encouraged to broaden their notion of violation beyond physical violence and to include the abuses of social, structural power. For example, a woman who lives on welfare as a single parent with two young children in a small basement apartment in a way also suffers violence.

Toy companies must be encouraged to create toys that do not aggrandize violence and stereotypical dominant male/submissive female role models.

Similarly, advertising companies should be encouraged to create advertisements which portray non-violent, but "real" relationships with women and men playing a variety of roles.

Schools must be encouraged to promote peaceful interaction among students, among teachers and between teachers and students, not only through curricula development, but also on the playground, in the classroom, and in school halls.

Funding should be provided to train individuals in schools, places of employment, and recreational clubs who would provide basic information and act as contact points for referral to appropriate services in the community. These "peer advocates" should be trained not just in the realities of physical violence in the home and the services available to women who are traumatized by physical violence, but also in the need for acceptable ways of behaving in all our spheres of life.

In order to give realistic hope to women in Canada, governments should be very cautious not to launch public education campaigns which advertise services which will not be able to meet the demands created by the public education campaigns.

More emergency respite child care is needed to give people a non-stigmatizing "safety valve", and some "time out" without invoking a host of controlling interventions.

The media should be encouraged to portray emotion as healthy and to avoid aggrandizing controlling relationships.

Awareness campaigns should be directed at teenage women so they can understand that the element of control functions in some forms of "love relationships". They should be helped to see, for example, that a boyfriend who phones his girlfriend 22 times a day is not displaying love, but instead is attempting to control her.

Churches should sponsor sessions to help people deal with friends and family who are experiencing different forms of violation.

CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF HOPE

Creating a new vision and making this vision a reality is both a frightening and an exciting challenge. It is a challenge that many women in Canada feel is long overdue. It has the potential to free us from the anaesthetized, passionless, controlling, unequal society we have been living in for too long.

The vision transcends our concern with physical violence. It addresses all institutions based on competition, controlling power, and rigid hierarchies. It rejects our individualistic, rational, controlling strategies for daily life. It addresses our social welfare system and our ways of interacting in our private lives. It criticizes social, legal, and health services based on stigmatization, charity, and control. It rejects mechanisms which make people feel imprisoned in their lives, robbing us all of hope.

We are ready for a radical change. On the way, we will

> *. . . probably have to become a community of pain before we can become a society free of violation.*
>
> Think-tank participant

The pain must be endured, for we will emerge at last to the hope that has supported us all along.

ENDNOTES

1. St. Augustine, as quoted by Robert McAfee Brown in Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture: A Challenge to Our Way of Living* (Ottawa: Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development, 1988), p. 140.

2. Secondary sources will not therefore be cited except in cases where the text elaborates beyond the scope of the discussion of the twelve "think-tank" participants.

3. Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development, *Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture: A Challenge to Our Way of Living* (Ottawa: Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development, 1988).

4. These themes are elaborated in much of the literature about wife battering. For example, see: Deborah Sinclair, *Understanding Wife Assault: A Training Manual for Counsellors and Advocates* (Toronto: Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Family Violence Program, 1985); and Linda MacLeod, *Battered But Not Beaten: Preventing Wife Battering in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1987).

5. Surjeet Kalsey, "Flesh Puppets", *Footprints of Silence* (London: The Third Eye, 1988), p. 54.

6. Surjeet Kalsey, "Creation of the Self" (last stanza only), *Footprints of Silence*, p. 9.

7. Betty Friedan, *The Second Stage* (New York: Summit Books, 1981, 1986).

8. Surjeet Kalsey, "I Want My Chaos Back" (first two-thirds of the poem), *Footprints of Silence*, p. 16.

9. Michele Landsberg, *Women & Children First: A provocative look at modern Canadian women at work and at home* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1982), p. 1.

APPENDIX I: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Lorraine Berzins, Church Council on Justice and Corrections, Ottawa, Ontario

Trudy Don, Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses and Steering Committee for a National Organization of Transition Houses, Toronto, Ontario

Surjeet Kalsey, Atira Transition House, Richmond, British Columbia

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Jennifer Mercer, Newfoundland Advisory Council on the Status of Women, St. John's, Newfoundland

Carol Oliver, Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, Calgary, Alberta

Cécile Rémillard-Beaudry, Member of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Winnipeg, Manitoba

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APPENDIX II: A PROPOSAL TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING ITS ACTION ON FAMILY VIOLENCE, BY LORRAINE BERZINS

INTRODUCTION

Bearing in mind what was expressed at the February 23-24, 1989 "think tank" on Women Violation as well as the specific kind of leadership activities that fall within the jurisdiction of the federal government, I would like to make some proposals for government action. The key elements are a media education campaign, a budget priorization exercise, and a strategy to sensitize decision-makers to the public policy issues.

These suggestions are based on the strong consensus which emerged from the "think tank" that there are fundamental links between family violence and the belief many of us have that it is right for some people in our society to use power — force if necessary — to control others. Efforts are required to raise awareness at this level of analysis if we are to have any long-term impact on reducing the acceptability of violating women (as well as children and the elderly) in this country. The proposals for action have also been formulated in recognition of government's highly effective role in reducing smoking and increasing participation in physical fitness activities.

The proposals are also based on the consensus that there are strong interconnections between family violence and other social problems — such as economic survival, housing, and racial-ethnic relations — which are affected by the policies and programs of a number of government departments, voluntary agencies, and private sector organizations. It is our belief that the links between these issues must be made visible and efforts must be made to work simultaneously at all these levels if we are to have any **significant** impact on reducing wife battering and other forms of abuse. The steps I am advocating for beginning this process also reflect our deep conviction that the only effective way to sensitize the key decision-makers to these issues is through experientially-based educational program designs such as have been successfully

developed by the women's movement and a number of grassroots community organizations.

Finally, the proposals have been developed with a considerable effort to be financially realistic. They call for action within existing budgets. Their potential effectiveness hinges on commitment to a vigorous message and methods, rather than commitment to the allocation of new funds.

THE FEDERAL MANDATE

The federal government has a leadership role to play in identifying social issues, in assessing and encouraging innovative ways of responding to these issues, and in developing national strategies. Accordingly, it can best serve us by:

- giving a **clear message** about what we believe to be the root causes and most effective means of reducing family violence;
- providing **incentives** to **promote awareness** of the contributing factors and to **encourage innovative strategies and alternatives** to reduce their occurrence and effects.

A Clear Message

■ A Major Media Campaign

The federal government should undertake a major media advertising campaign to send out a clear message that the underlying root causes of family violence are linked to the "ethic of domination" that has long been accepted in our society as the basis for order. The "right" to use violence, if necessary, to maintain that domination is based on our belief that it is morally right to do so for the sake of preserving order. The media campaign should aim at raising awareness of:

- the dominance/submissiveness ethic and its links to family violence;
- the surrounding values of competitiveness, individual success, possessiveness, and their links to family violence;
- alternative possible responses to the problem of "order" (e.g., conflict-resolution strategies, racial-ethnic relations and racism awareness, sexism awareness, self-help solidarity and mutual support, economic justice so that no person's economic survival is dependent on the livelihood of another, etc.).

Dramatized Vignettes

The media campaign about the negative effects of the ethic of domination should be carried out in the form of dramatized vignettes showing a scenario of a real-life situation, the negative dominant/submissive pattern we usually fall into, and an alternative response (somewhat like the "Something to Grow On" series aimed at kids during Saturday morning cartoons). These vignettes should be very short, but there should be a wide variety of them showing the negative pattern at work in many sectors of our lives: in school, in families, in employment situations, towards kids, between spouses or partners, in dating situations, towards the elderly, on the playground, in sports, in health-care situations, etc. They should **not** present a too-good-to-be-true image of what we **should** feel like (à la Coca-Cola, Kodak Film, and long-distance telephone calls to Mom and Dad commercials). Instead, real-life negative feelings and problems and a possible alternative response to them should be presented. Sometimes that response could mean respite for the caregiver to a child or an elderly person. Through this wide variety of examples should come **one simple strong** and **recurring** message: **THIS SOCIETY DOES NOT BELIEVE IN THE RIGHT TO DOMINATION OF ANY ONE PERSON BY ANOTHER.**

■ Soliciting the Contribution of Real-Life Vignettes

The federal government should actively solicit the **contribution of vignettes** from all levels of society to be used in the media campaign. It should actively solicit and publicize **examples of real-life innovative initiatives** that illustrate a response to a problem related to family violence that best upholds the principles described above.

Incentives for Public Sector Strategies

The federal government should sponsor a program of incentives and rewards to challenge every public sector to examine how the domination/submissiveness ethic is reflected in its own area of jurisdiction and mandate, and what specific steps it can take to stop reinforcing it, to correct its negative effects, to provide and encourage use of alternatives to it.

■ Experientially Designed Sensitization Workshops

Every federal public service agency and Member of Parliament should undergo an experientially designed sensitization workshop in preparation for the above exercise to raise awareness of:

- the dominance/submissiveness experience and ethic, and its links to family violence;
- the surrounding experience and values of competitiveness, individual success, possessiveness, and their links to family violence;
- alternative possible responses to the problem of "order" (e.g., conflict-resolution strategies, racial-ethnic relations and racism awareness, sexism awareness, self-help solidarity and mutual support, economic justice so that no person's economic survival is dependent on the livelihood of another, etc.).

Budget Priorization Exercise

Every public service department should then be challenged to indicate in its budget itemization each activity's or program's potential for reducing the impact of the ethic of dominance in our culture as well as any other contribution to the prevention of family violence in all its forms.

Incentives for Provincial/Territorial and Private Sector Strategies

The federal government should provide a program of incentives and rewards, challenging every provincial/territorial and private sector agency to examine how the domination/submissiveness ethic is reflected in its own sphere of activities.

The federal government should provide financial and other support to any provincial/territorial and private sector agency or group willing to undergo an experientially designed sensitization workshop on the dominance ethic issues and their links to family violence, as described above.

The federal government should provide incentives to reward provincial/territorial and private sector funding and cost-sharing requests that include a capability for reducing the impact of the ethic of dominance, or any other contribution to the prevention of family violence in all its forms.